

IMPORTANT CORRESPONDENCE.

The calumny so industriously circulated of late against General Harrison, by which it has been attempted to fix upon him the odium of a man seller, is now thoroughly and effectually exposed. It remains to be seen whether the Van Buren presses generally, which have given currency to this slander, will follow the magnanimous example of the New York Evening Post by making an honorable retraction.

GEN. HARRISON—WHITE SLAVERY!

Richmond, Sept. 15, 1836.

Dear Sir—Your political opponents in the state of Maryland have, for some time, been actively urging against you a new charge, that of *selling white men*, which probably had no considerable effect in the recent elections in that state, and which is evidently much relied upon throughout the United States. I enclose you paper, (the Baltimore Republican,) containing the charge in full, and I beg you, as an act of justice to yourself and your friends, to enable me to refute a charge against the uniform tenor of your life, which, I am well aware, has been replete with instances of distinguished private liberality and public sacrifice.

With the highest respect, I have the honor to be your fellow citizen,
JOHN H. PLEASANTS.
Gen. Wm. H. Harrison.

Richmond, Sept. 15, 1836.

Dear Sir—I acknowledge the receipt of your favor of this date. I have before heard of the accusation to which it refers. On my way hither, I met yesterday with a young gentleman of Maryland, who informed me that a vote of mine in the Senate of Ohio had been published, in favor of a law to sell persons imprisoned under a judgment for debt for a term of years, if unable otherwise to discharge the execution. I did not, for a moment, hesitate to declare that I had never given any such vote; and that if a vote of that description had been published and ascribed to me, it was an infamous forgery. Such an act would have been repugnant to my feelings and in direct conflict with my opinions public and private, through the whole course of my life. No such proposition was ever submitted to the Legislature of Ohio—none such would, for a moment, have been entertained—nor would any son of hers have dared to propose it.

So far from being willing to sell men for debts which they are unable to discharge, I am, and ever have been, opposed to all imprisonment for debt. Fortunately, I have it in my power to show that such has been my established opinion; and that, in a public capacity, I avowed and acted upon it. Will those who have preferred the unfounded and malicious accusation refer to the Journals of the Senate of the United States, 2d session, 19th Congress, page 3235? It will there be seen that I was one of the committee which reported a bill to abolish imprisonment for debt. When the bill was before the Senate, I advocated its adoption, and, on its passage, voted in its favor. See Senate Journal, 1st session, 20th Congress, pages 101 and 102.

It is not a little remarkable that, if the entire I am accused of having made, to subject men to sale for the nonpayment of their debts, had been successful, I might, from the state of my pecuniary circumstances at the time, have been the first victim. I repeat, the charge is a vile calumny. At no period of my life, would I have consented to subject the poor and unfortunate to such a degradation; nor have I omitted to exert myself in their behalf against such an attempt to oppress them.

It is sought to support the charge by means of garbled extracts from the journals of the Senate of Ohio. The section of the bill which is employed for that purpose had no manner of reference to the relation of creditor and debtor, and could not by possibility subject the debtor to the control of his creditor. None know better than the authors of the calumny that the alleged section is utterly at variance with the charge which it is attempted to found upon it; and that, so far from a proposition to invest a creditor with power over the liberty of his debtor, it had respect only to the mode of disposing of public offenders, who had been found guilty by a jury of their fellow citizens of some crime against the laws of their state. That was exclusively the import and design of the section of the bill upon the motion to strike out which, I voted in the negative. So you perceive, that in place of voting to enlarge the power of creditors, the vote which I gave concerned alone the treatment of malefactors convicted of crimes against the public.

It would extend this letter to an inconvenient length to go fully into the reasons which led me at the time to an opinion in favor of the proposed treatment of that class of offenders who would have fallen within its operations, nor is such an expose called for. The measure was by no means a novelty in other parts of the country. In the State of Delaware, there is an act now in force, in similar words with the section of the bill before the Ohio Senate, which has been made of late the pretext of such insidious invective. Laws with somewhat similar provisions may probably be found in many other of the States. In practice, the measure would have ameliorated the condition of those who were under confinement.

As the law stood, they were liable, under the sentence to confinement in the common jail, where offenders of various degrees of profligacy, of different ages, sex, and color, were crowded together. Under such circumstances, it is obvious that this bad must become worse, whilst reformation could hardly be expected in respect to any. The youthful offender, it might be hoped, would be reclaimed under the operation of the proposed system; but there was great reason to fear that still greater corruption amid the contagion of a common receptacle of vice. Besides, the proposed amendment of the law presupposed that the delinquent was in confinement for the non-payment of a fine and costs of prosecution—the payment of which was a part of the sentence; it seemed, therefore, humane in respect to the offender to relieve him from confinement which deprived him of the means of discharging the penalty, and to place him in a situation in which he might work out his deliverance, even at a loss for a time of his personal liberty.

But I forbear to go further into the reasons which led me, sixteen years ago, as a member of the Ohio Senate, to entertain a favorable opinion of an alteration which was proposed in the criminal police of the State. It is certain that neither in respect to myself, or those who concurred with me, was the opinion at the time considered as the result of unfriendly bias towards the poor or unfortunate. Nay, the last objection which I could have anticipated, even from the eager and reckless desire to assail me, was a charge of unkindness to the humble and poor of the community.

I am, my dear sir, with great respect,
Your humble servant,
WM. H. HARRISON.
J. H. Pleasants, Esq.

It may be said by some that the above should be received with some grains of allowance, inasmuch as it appears on the eve of a Presidential election. To obviate any scruples of this sort, it is fortunate in our power to present the views of Gen. Harrison on the same subject, freely given by him in the following letter, written sixteen years ago, when he was not a candidate for office. We ask every one to read it, and then judge for himself:

To the Editors of the Advertiser:
Sir—In your paper of the 15th inst., I observed a most violent attack upon eleven other members of the late Senate and myself, for a *supposed* vote given at the last session, for the passage of a law to “sell debtors in certain cases.” It is such as has been made by some that the above should be received with some grains of allowance, inasmuch as it appears on the eve of a Presidential election. To obviate any scruples of this sort, it is fortunate in our power to present the views of Gen. Harrison on the same subject, freely given by him in the following letter, written sixteen years ago, when he was not a candidate for office. We ask every one to read it, and then judge for himself:

“Messrs. Editors: I most sincerely hope and desire that you will have my name expunged from the Van Buren Corresponding Committee for this county. It has been put there without my consent or wish, and my present determination is to vote for General Harrison, and not Martin Van Buren, at the ensuing election for President. JOHN SILVERS.

Waynesboro, Sept. 1, 1836.

“Messrs. Editors: I regret to find, in your paper of week before last, my name on the Van Buren Corresponding Committee for this county, inasmuch as I never had the most remote idea of giving that gentleman my vote for the Presidency. I supported General Jackson every time he was a candidate, and now, like thousands of Old Hickory’s friends, I intend to give my vote for General Harrison, and exert what little influence I may possess in promoting his success to the Presidency. You will therefore oblige me, by having my name stricken from said committee.

ABRAHAM TEBO.

Stamford, Sept. 2, 1836.”

“Gentlemen—I was much surprised to find my name placed on the Van Buren Corresponding Committee for this county. It was placed there without my knowledge or consent and I request that you will have it withdrawn. I never did vote for Van Buren and never will, but I will record my vote in November next for Gen. Harrison. JACOB CROFT.

Sept. 5, 1836.”

[From the Augusta (Geo.) Sentinel.]
OUTRAGE UPON SOUTHERN
RIGHTS.

We furnish our readers this morning with a decision which gives an entire new feature to the slave question. It has just been decided by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, that a slave carried into that state by his owner, becomes *co-tenant* free!

What think you of that, people of the South?

If a Southerner carries a servant or a nurse with him into the State of Massachusetts, the highest judicial tribunal of that State is ready with its wrists and processes to wrest that servant from him and pronounce him a freeman before his face! And then, as if to add the grossest insult to the deepest injury, we are told that this decision is no interference with the rights of the slave holder, but that rather the carrying of a slave into a state which does not tolerate slavery is an interference with the laws of that state! People of the South! Will you sleep forever over your dearest rights? Are you willing to sustain forever a confederation with States into which you dare not travel with your property, lest that property becomes by law actually confiscated? Of what value to you is a Union which enables those who are in common with yourselves, members of that Union, to destroy the right of private property and deprive you of that which is justly yours?

This is the strongest and boldest step ever yet taken against the rights of the South, and leaves the puny efforts of the abolitionists at an immeasurable distance in the rear. The abolitionists themselves have thus far asked little more than the liberty of publishing and distributing what they please on the subject of slavery, (had enough in all conscience,) but here is a high and powerful court, which sets our negroes free as soon as they can get within its reach. Shall we submit to this? Has it not been enough that we have borne for years with a patience almost amounting to servility, the exactions of the tariff for the benefit of the North? Is it not enough that the efforts of the General Government have been filled by Southern earnings to be lavished upon those States in the way of appropriations? And must we now submit to have our property taken from us by courts and juries, and be insultingly told such things as irreverence with our rights?

The above is a pretty fair sample of the arrogance and blustering of the Southern aristocracy. We shall not be surprised to find in the next number of the Georgia Sentinel a proffered reward of some twenty thousand dollars for the head of that notorious northern incendiary, Mr Justice Shaw!

Mr Van Buren is in town—doubtless putting the finishing touch to the Fall machinery—tightening a band there—turning a screw here—and oiling an occasional wheel or so. He has not precessed as usual by his Pilot Fish—but Holland the Yankee Schoolmaster, who wrote the romance mislabeled his “Life,” and other parochial small fry are wriggling in his wake.

Albany Journal.

Commencement at Bowdoin College. The graduating class consisted of 22. The degree of A. M. was conferred on 18; that of M. D. on 25. Several honorary degrees were also conferred; that of A. M. upon John Neal, Robert Goodnow, and Gershon F. Cox; that of M. D. upon Jonathan Page and Elisha F. Ford; and that of D.D. upon Thomas Price of London.

Harrison in Washington. When an anxious crowd of admirers, of friends, of old intimates and new advocates of Harrison, the patriotic and independent committee, were at Gadsby's awaiting his appearance at the breakfast, on Wednesday, an old gentleman, plainly dressed, was seen gently rapping at the door of Mrs. Clark's boarding house, and when the cloth was spread at her breakfast table, the worthy landlady said, “Ah, General, I never thought that you would leave your numerous and anxious friends at Gadsby's to breakfast with me.” Harrison never forgot an old friend. Mrs. C. had been his landlady in other days, when the General was a Senator in Washington. This is a simple, but a genuine story—indicative of the high and many courtesy of the General.

your correspondent, I think that imprisonment for debt, under any circumstances, but that where fraud is alleged, is at war with the best principles of our constitution, and OUGHT TO BE ABOLISHED.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,
Wm. H. HARRISON.
North Bend, 2d Decr. 1821.

SIGNING OFF!

General Harrison seems to have played and layed among “this party” in Staunton, Virginia, during his late brief visit at that place.

We find the following notes from members of the Van Buren Corresponding Committee, to the editor of the Spectator.

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The abolitionists themselves have thus far asked little more than the liberty of publishing and distributing what they please on the subject of slavery, (had enough in all conscience,) but here is a high and powerful court, which sets our negroes free as soon as they can get within its reach.

Shall we submit to this? Has it not been enough that we have borne for years with a patience almost amounting to servility, the exactions of the tariff for the benefit of the North?

Is it not enough that the efforts of the General Government have been filled by Southern earnings to be lavished upon those States in the way of appropriations?

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